



Advisory Board Chairman researches history of Idaho's airfields

By: Idaho Transportation Department, Division of Communications

Retirement and long winters in southern Idaho enable Rodger Sorensen to combine two passions and produce a valuable historic resource.

Sorensen, who is chairman of the Aeronautics Advisory Board, has long been interested in history and aviation. He is melding the interests into a comprehensive inventory of Idaho airfields – both past and present – with the intent of archiving the information and storing it on the Transportation Department's website.

The project began in 2006, with an effort to list several of the facilities on the National Register of Historic Places.

That project was modified, but Sorensen continued the research, with help from his wife Mary and aviation colleague Bill Womack and his wife Karen. Sorensen, 66, retired as a commercial pilot after nearly 35 years with Northwest Airlines and now devotes some of his energies to Idaho airport research.

He was based in Seattle for a decade and has flown extensively throughout the U.S., Northern Europe, Asia and the Pacific Rim. He began flying in about 1963, first as a private pilot, and then as a commercial pilot. He started flying Boeing 707s with Northwest Airlines and was in the second training



Rodger Sorensen

class for the 747s, which he spent most of his career operating.

After retiring from Northwest in 2001, he focused his attention on his ranch midway between Mackay and Sun Valley on the Big Lost River and was appointed to the ITD Aeronautics Advisory Board a short time later.

Sorensen had no idea which path his research would take when he began. After the initial intent was modified, he continued to scour historic records on Idaho's aviation infrastructure. For one month each of the past three years, he



Bradley Field 1953

See Idaho's airfields

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Idaho's airfields

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and Mary relocated to Boise where they poured over records at the Division of Aeronautics and the Idaho Historical Society.

Womack volunteered to help his friend and former flight instructor with the project and has devoted his efforts to scanning images of airports into a file for inclusion in the historic report. To date, he has processed approximately 1,100 images – about twice the number of airfields Sorensen has identified in his research.

Those images, including aerial photographs and Google satellite views, will be integrated into a page on each airfield. Other data will include: date the airfield was established, surface type, elevation, longitude and latitude,



Boise Air Terminal - Gowen Field

length, layout, associated cities, airport classification, width, owner, county and a brief history.

"We wanted to put together a preliminary report and demonstrate what could be done with the research," Sorensen said. "We suspect that when it goes to the general public for response, we'll have quite a few changes to make."

Sorensen and Womack have looked for historical documents related to general, private, commercial and government-owned airfields in all 44 Idaho counties. He estimates the process is about 75 percent complete.

The retired pilot guesses that he and Womack, along with their wives, have invested nearly 800 hours in the project, based on three pilgrimages to Boise. He tries to fit the research in with many other pursuits.

In addition to his position on the Aeronautics Advisory Board, Sorensen

also serves on the Soda Springs School District Education Foundation, a county economic development organization, a county emergency response team, the local airport advisory board, and the Chesterfield Foundation that is committed to promoting and preserving Oregon Trail history.

For the past few years, he has assisted with the maintenance of the Copper Basin and Twin Bridges airstrips in the Big Lost River drainage on a voluntary basis, using his own equipment and resources. He regularly flies into backcountry airstrips and tries to visit as many of the state airfields as possible when conditions allow.

"Idaho has some of the finest, pristine areas that you can only get to by air. It has the most backcountry airstrips in the lower 48 states." His appointment to the Aeronautics Advisory Board "was a terrific job for me... it gives me an opportunity to support the aeronautics community."

The **Rudder Flutter** is published by the Idaho Division of Aeronautics, Office of Safety and Education. Articles appearing in this publication are the opinion of the writer and do not necessarily represent the views of the Staff, the Administrator, or the Department. All reasonable attempts are made to ensure the accuracy of the articles contained herein. The **Rudder Flutter** is published in March, June, September, and December. All submissions are due in this office by the 15th of the month **before** the desired month of publication.



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Backcountry Courtesy

1. Fly to the right side of the canyon;
2. Turn on your landing lights;
3. Monitor 122.9 and make position reports;
4. Announce your intentions while in the traffic pattern and on the ground;
5. Avoid multiple takeoffs and landings;
6. Stay as high as possible except during takeoff and landing (2000 feet AGL recommended);
7. Reduce power and RPMs when safety permits;
8. Above all, be safe.



Boundary County Airport in Bonners Ferry, Idaho

By: Our Friends at Boundary County Airport

The Boundary County Airport is a growing airport in the far north Idaho panhandle. With the support of County Commissioners, the Airport Board, and grants from the FAA, this airport can boast of its accomplishments, its future goals, and its services.

Through FAA grants from fuel taxes used for airport improvement and State and County support, this rural airport is working to complete a full-length taxiway, a ramp overlay, new paint and striping. Estimates are that these projects will be completed this summer; upgrading the runway and ramp ratings to "B-2," for small and medium sized jets. Future projects include lengthening the runway to 5,200 feet, acquiring property around the airport perimeter, as well as security fencing. A GPS approach is in the planning along with an Automated Weather Observation Station (AWOS). Because many new hangars are being built around the airport, new taxiways for future hangar sites are also on the agenda.

Two new, 12,000 gallon, above-ground fuel tanks have been installed making 100LL and Jet A fuel available around the clock. Boundary County Commissioners displayed excellent foresight by including a single-point refueling capability for jet fuel with the installation.

Northern Air Staff



Boundary County Airport

Boundary County Airport also supports a local EAA chapter. Each summer the Chapter hosts a huckleberry pancake breakfast with eggs and sausage, juice and plenty of coffee on the last Saturday of the month (May through September). The first one for 2008 was held on May 31 from 8:00 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. in honor of "War birds." A Young Eagles Rally is also planned later this summer, as well as various fly-outs. The summer flying fun is getting a good start.

The FBO, Northern Air Inc., offers many services. Its Part 135 operation has upgraded to a Basic Air Carrier Certificate allowing a total of five pilots and five aircraft to be flown for charter flights. Contracts are held with various government agencies for aerial wildlife surveys, fire detection and other aerial work. Currently a Part 61 flight school,

Northern Air is preparing to upgrade to a Part 141 flight school. Full maintenance facilities are also on the field.

The Northern Air employees are pleasant and work hard to make Boundary County Airport the friendliest airport. Courtesy cars are available, in case you want to visit the local casino or just want to go down the street to the local restaurant. The terminal is neat and clean, offers pilot supplies and even has a popcorn machine with great popcorn. During the summer months, a variety of ice cream is offered and, if you happen to ask for a root beer float, you just might get one.

Come visit the Boundary County Airport, witness how it is growing and meet those who work there – make a special trip. It is well worth seeing all the progress and the hangar flying is as good as it gets! For questions or for more information, please call 208-267-4359 or visit our website at www.northernair.biz.

– Happy Flying –



Radio Chatter

By: Frank Lester
Safety/Education Coordinator

Welcome back seaplanes



By AOPA
ePublishing staff

Good news for seaplane pilots: The Bureau of Reclamation intends to return seaplane access to more than 400

lakes in 17 western states.

Thanks to the efforts of AOPA, the Seaplane Pilots Association, local pilot groups and state aviation agencies, the bureau has agreed to change a rule that should eliminate the seaplane prohibition on its lakes. The issue arose when the bureau in 2006 revised a federal rule, which had unintended consequences. The bureau was asking for documentation that seaplanes had used the lakes in the past or they wouldn't be allowed to use them in the future.

AOPA pushed to reverse the rule on the grounds that there was no documentation requirement in the past; the bureau did not conduct proper or thorough outreach to the local agencies prior to the rule being enacted; and there was no safety issue from which to protect the public.

The bureau intends to issue a revised rule within the next two months, which will allow seaplanes to operate the same as they did prior to 2006.

McCall IAA Chapter Organizes First Search Clinic

Many thanks go to Rik Poston, President of the McCall chapter of the Idaho Aviation Association (IAA) and his wife Kathy for organizing the search pilot/observer clinic in McCall on April 9th. This was the first of a series of clinics to be conducted throughout the state by Aeronautics.

Nearly 30 pilots and observers attended including Patti Bolen, the Valley County Sheriff, John Anderson, McCall Airport Manager and Fred Abt of the Bureau of Homeland Security. The agenda for the day covered the Idaho Statutes governing Aerial Search in Idaho, the search process, survival preparation for search pilots and aircraft performance. Special thanks go to Ray Glidden, retired Aeronautics chief SAR Coordinator, Larry Jindrich, Idaho Fish and Game, and Lori MacNichol, McCall Mountain/Canyon Flying Seminars for their expert assistance.

The clinic provided not only important information about aerial searches but also provided excellent feedback and suggestions from the participating pilots and observers, providing guidance on how best to proceed in future programs. The intent of the program is two fold: First, to contact each of the pilots/observers in our database, those who have indicated that they are



Larry Jindrich talks about survival preparation.

volunteers on their Airman Registration, and develop an accurate list of contacts by (ITD) transportation district; and Second, to bring everyone up to speed on the search process and organization.

Scheduling for these clinics is anticipated to resume in late summer or early fall. I have received many requests to assist from individuals as well as local aerial search organizations. I sincerely appreciate your interest and will be asking many of you to help set up the next round of clinics in your area when planning resumes.

Thanks to Rik, Kathy and the McCall IAA for helping get this program off on the right foot.

Emmett Airport Receives Grant

The Emmett Airport received a grant of \$206,000 from Aeronautics to reconstruct their runway. The city council, after receiving a letter outlining the grant funding process, will decide when to schedule the work. The project could start as early as this summer or as late as next spring.

Proposed College Aviation Program

Members of the Idaho Division of Professional-Technical Education (IDPTE), Boise State University (BSU),

See Radio Chatter

Continued on page 5



Lori MacNichol discusses aircraft performance.



Through-the-fence: Residential Air Parks

By: John Anderson, A.A.E, President, IAMA

FAA has long discouraged "through-the-fence" agreements at airports which receive FAA AIP grants. A "through-the-fence" agreement grants access to the airport for lands which are contiguous to, but not owned by the airport operator. Recently, the FAA has clarified their position, making it more palatable to grant access to hangar and business park operations, but making it a violation of grant assurances to allow residential uses "through-the-fence."

Essentially, if there are no residential components to a "through-the-fence" agreement, and the off-airport agreement is treated the same as on airport agreements, then this could be

acceptable to FAA. This means that the agreement must assure compliance with all assurances that the airport is responsible for, and that they pay the same or more land rent and use fees than on airport tenants pay. Fuel flowage fees, land rent, landing fees, etc. all have to be collected and paid just as they would have to be for on airport tenants and operators.

However, residential airparks will earn airports non-compliance status with the FAA, meaning they will be unlikely to ever receive grant funds in the future. Many people are starting to advocate for some residential airpark uses. This could be beneficial to an

airport in that additional operating income could be forthcoming from Property Owner Assessments for the airport, and money for grant match could be available.

While this may not be appropriate for airports that generate a lot of noise, and the residential uses would create a safety hazard, it may be an important asset to the community in rural and recreational areas.

At this point in time when the FAA is considering cutting off and or decreasing grants to smaller NPIAS airports, it seems like development that encourages aviation would be appropriate and encouraged.

Radio Chatter

Continued from page 4

Idaho State University, College of Southern Idaho and Northern Idaho College, met with representatives of the aviation community including Aeronautics, Idaho Aviation Association (IAA), Idaho 99s, Idaho Aviation Foundation, Idaho Aviation Hall of Fame and Jetstream Aviation, in Boise on May 1st to discuss the possibility and options for a college-level aviation program in Idaho. The meeting was made possible by a \$2,500 IDPTE grant to BSU and considered both a two-year associate degree program and a four-year baccalaureate degree program as part of the new College of Western Idaho (CWI) curriculum.

Keith Bumstead, IAA, Mike Lyons, BSU, and Dr. Dick Miller, PhD, will form a sub-committee to develop a "statement of purpose" and an initial vision for aviation training in Idaho.

The 406 MHz ELT: A Change Your Life Depends On

I attended a recent State Search Coordinators' Workshop and came away with one very disturbing issue: with the end of satellite monitoring of

121.5/243.0 MHz ELT signals only a few months away, there are over 200,000 GA aircraft that have not changed over to the 406 MHz ELT. On February 1, 2009, the switch will be thrown and the COSPAS/SARSAT satellites will no longer track the older 121.5 MHz ELTs.

Most of the resistance to changing, we were told, is due to the expense of the new units plus installation. Cost of the units is coming down and many of these new sets can take advantage of the location and wiring from the older sets and be installed with minimum modification.

Regardless of the cost, on February 1, 2009 if you have only the 121.5 ELT and you are overdue or missing, the only way a search will be started will be through AFSS notification that you are overdue (**IF** you filed a flight plan) or we are notified by a friend or relative that you haven't arrived at a planned destination or returned from a planned trip. Often those calls, with the exception of Flight Service, aren't made immediately and may not be for several days. You were due back on Friday night but aren't noticed missing until you fail to show up for work on

Monday or you crash on the first day of a two-week vacation. Whatever the case, without a 406 MHz ELT on board, your search will be reminiscent of those searches conducted before the advent of the ELT. An important piece of the puzzle will be missing and our ability to narrow the search area will be impeded. Searches that could be resolved in a matter of minutes or hours will become days and weeks.

Don't remove this important tool from our search resources. Don't diminish your chances of being found should you turn up missing. Invest in a new 406 MHz ELT before February 1, 2009.



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Airport Maintenance

By: Mark Young
Airport Maintenance Manager



Garden Valley Test Holes

Recently I informed you that the Idaho Aviation Association (IAA) and the Idaho Aviation Foundation (IAF) had volunteered to provide funding for materials and labor to build a public shower facility at Garden Valley. When we received our permit from the Idaho Department of Lands, two test holes were dug along the north side of the runway near midfield as required by the Central District Health Department (CDHD). Water levels in these holes are being monitored weekly with the results being forwarded to CDHD in June for their determination as to what type of drain field will be required. For those of you flying into Garden Valley this spring and early summer, the two PVC pipes sticking out of the ground near midfield on the road side are those test holes.

Dave Rauscher has volunteered to assist with the design of the shower building. We hope that construction will begin late this summer or fall. Once again we thank the IAA and the IAF for their contributions to this effort.

Johnson Creek Caretakers

Last fall we made arrangements for a wonderful new couple to take care of the needs of the Johnson Creek airstrip. Unfortunately, we've learned they will be unable to work with us this summer, so I have asked Gene and Cody Hargett to return for an encore performance as our interim caretakers. They graciously agreed to help us for another year and we welcome their return.

Also, in past editions of the Rudder Flutter, we have explained that caretakers at Johnson Creek live in state-provided housing at the airport. For that reason they are unable to escape the daily routine of visitors wanting courtesy

cars, directions, and general information. Our employees go the extra mile to ensure that guests receive everything we are able to provide; therefore we appreciate your consideration in allowing them their privacy after hours and on their regularly scheduled days off (Tuesday and Wednesday).

Thanks For The Memories

After 30 years in state government I've decided it's time to pursue new adventures and will be retiring. My last work day was May 30, followed by an official retirement date of July 31. My first 4 years in the public sector were with the Port of Entry (POE) program within the Department of Law Enforcement, followed by another 10 years in the POE program under the Idaho Transportation Department. In the spring of 1994 I made the best move of my professional career and embarked on what turned out to be a great run with the Division of Aeronautics.

In the last fourteen years I have come to know some of the greatest, most unselfish people in this country. They are the volunteers who give so much of themselves and their time to properly care for our backcountry airstrips, regardless of ownership. The Division of Aeronautics understands that this community of people is helping to protect the assets so dear to them; however, we also realize that these same folks know we rely on them to help us get our job done. With limited funding sources and the increasing price of materials, it truly takes a group effort to maintain the network of emergency and recreational airstrips for which Idaho is known. I will miss this group of devoted aviators and their (your) positive attitude. Thank you for all you've done.

There is another large group of people I must thank profusely: the employees of the Idaho Transportation Department...one and all. From the dedicated, professional individuals within the Division of Aeronautics, to those working at outlying maintenance sheds around the state, to folks in Supply, Financial Services, Human Resources, Planning, Highways, and so

many other units. We rely on all of these people for everything from loan of equipment to replacement courtesy cars, payment of bills, advertising of equipment to be purchased by state bid, assistance with hiring of employees, and repair of vehicles and equipment. It has been an honor to work in such a diverse agency and being able to see first hand how so many employees go the extra mile to assist others in completing their tasks and meeting their deadlines.

One final, special thanks must go to Administrator J.V. Dethomas. JV is not only one of the most intelligent people I know, but he is also a true people person, in that he cares about the people working for and around him. He pushes those around him to be as good as they can be, supports their efforts at advancement and training, and offers praise and reward for a job well done. Under his leadership, division employees have grown together once again and become a true, multi-dimensional team working toward common goals. Should I have elected to remain in state service for a longer period of time, I can't think of anyone else I would rather have supporting my efforts.

I really have no idea what the future holds other than to provide assistance and support to several family members and friends who need help at this time in their lives. I have no doubt that the next year in particular will reveal something missing in my being: that of working beside such a fantastic group of people who call themselves Idaho General Aviation. Thank you for all you've done to make my career such an enjoyable part of my life; I will miss you all.

Idaho Airport/ Facility Directory

The most up-to-date information on all Idaho airports is available on our website, www.itd.idaho.gov/aero. Click on Airport Facility Directory to access the map-based system. Please contact Aeronautics at 208-334-8775 or mark.lessor@itd.idaho.gov with updates/suggestions regarding this online directory.



Thomas Creek gets a Spring Sprucing

By: Mark Lessor, Airport Technician

A sunny and cool April morning greeted over 35 Idaho Aviation Association (IAA) members and guests as they made their way into Thomas Creek on the Middle Fork of the Salmon River for the season's first IAA work party. Temperatures were in the thirties as the sun began to work its way across the runway. Aircraft began to arrive around 0830 and within an hour there were nearly twenty aircraft on the "field". An Islander from McCall Aviation transported the materials for constructing two shade shelters. Shovels, wheelbarrows and bags of concrete mix were carried in by single engine aircraft, courtesy of the volunteers.



Thomas Creek work party and their aircraft.

After dividing the materials between the two sites (one near each end of the runway), the volunteers began digging holes for the posts, while others dug a

new hole for the pit toilet (a truly humanitarian effort). Outhouse cleaning and windssock replacement rounded out the tasks for the day. Digging proved easy in some spots, not so in others. Posts were set, outhouses moved, and fun was had by all.

expertise of Todd Glass, our utility craftsman.

We will return to Thomas creek in the next few weeks to finish the shelter roofs. The new structures will certainly provide welcome shelter from rain and sun to all the aviators who find themselves lucky enough to spend time at the most isolated, and possibly most scenic, of the State-owned airports.



Digging post holes for new shelters.



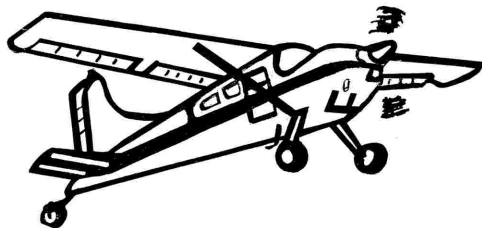
Unloading McCall Aviation's Islander.

IAA member Jerry Terlisner, who has for years coordinated projects such as these, ensured that there were refreshments and tools available. The IAA Treasure Valley Chapter supplied materials, while the Division of Aeronautics picked up the tab for the Islander and provided the labor and

Retiring Aeronautics Airport Manager, Mark Young, specifically thanked the Treasure Valley Chapter, IAA, for their continued support of the division's programs and facilities. "The IAA, and in particular Jerry Terlisner, deserve a heartfelt **Thanks** for buying two picnic tables and the materials for two awnings at Thomas Creek," Mark said emphatically.

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Aerial Search...and YOU



By: Frank Lester, Safety/Education Coordinator

The one subject that has generated the most questions about aerial search in Idaho is the delineation of responsibilities during the search for a missing aircraft. Who really carries the responsibility for the search? The County Sheriff? The Civil Air Patrol (CAP)? The Bureau of Homeland Security? Who???

Excellent questions and I hope that the explanation that follows will answer those questions.

Aeronautics has formally held the responsibility for the aerial search for lost and missing airmen and aircraft since Title 21-114 was first passed in 1947. Currently as stated in the Idaho Statutes "...Search and rescue coordination shall be under the direction and supervision of the chief of the bureau of homeland security within the military division, with aerial search operations coordinated by the department, division of aeronautics."

Over the years, Aeronautics has changed from a department to a bureau and finally to a division within the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD). Although responsibility for aerial search was eventually transferred to the ITD Director, that responsibility continued to be delegated to Aeronautics. In 2005, aerial search was moved from ITD to the Bureau of Homeland Security under

Title 46-1006 of the State Disaster Preparedness Act. However, in spite of this change, the Division of Aeronautics retains its responsibilities as stated under Title 21.

The greatest confusion revolves around the division of authority and responsibility between Aeronautics and the county sheriff. Effective July 1 of this year, Senate Bill 1279, signed into law by the Governor on February 27 amended Title 31, Counties and County Law, adding a new section, 31-2229, further defining the sheriff's jurisdiction during an aerial search: "...For the purpose of this section: (a) **"Aerial search"** means a response by the bureau of homeland security and the Idaho transportation department's division of aeronautics to a missing or overdue aircraft or airman. b) **"Rescue"** means a response by the sheriff to recover lost, missing, injured, impaired or incapacitated persons in imminent danger of injury or death. (c) **"Search"** means a response by the sheriff to locate an overdue, missing or lost person... (3) **All aerial search assets** shall be under the coordination of the Idaho transportation department's **division of aeronautics**. The **ground aspects** of the search and rescue of lost aircraft and airmen shall be under the supervision of the **county sheriff**, in **coordination** with the chief of the bureau of homeland security and the

administrator of the division of aeronautics."

The bottom line is that we, Aeronautics, have been given the responsibility of coordinating all aerial searches for missing aircraft and airmen within Idaho. However, Idaho's aerial search program is a joint effort. In order for it to be successful, it is imperative that every volunteer understand that we need their cooperation and assistance.

We must ensure four things:

1. The effort is well coordinated;
2. Every lead has been thoroughly investigated;
3. Search resources are used as efficiently as possible; and
4. Your safety.

Some of the greatest concern has been expressed by groups of pilots or aerial posses who have attached themselves, whether loosely or formally, to a particular county sheriff or ground search organization. My purpose here is not to wave the law in your face as a red flag or attempt to separate you from your commitment to another search agency or to interfere in any way with that commitment. Your commitment is commendable and we support you in that effort. However, in an aerial search you must understand that not only for the success of that search but also for your own safety, we must work together.

To everyone who came out and supported the spring SAFE PILOT SEMINARS — THANK YOU!

Especially:

Natalie Bergeven

Robin Wells

ISU Idaho Falls

EAA Chapter 328

Friends of the Sandpoint Airport

Centennial Distributing

Eastern Idaho EAA Chapter 407

Idaho Business Aviation Association

Dick Roberts

EAA Chapter 1441

Intermountain Chapter 99s

Community of Sandpoint

John Blakely

Twin Falls Farm Bureau

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FAASTeam and Wings

Lewiston Airport

Chris Popov

O'Day Custom Construction

"Only with your support are we successful."



The Color of Aviation

Gridley Rowles: TBMs, Johnson's Flea Circus and the Iowa Cornhusker

By: Frank Lester
Safety/Education Coordinator

I was sifting through some material looking for ideas and anecdotes to use in this article. I was engrossed in an especially well written piece, the kind that absorbs your imagination to the point where you honestly swear that you were there. The story is no longer a grouping of words and phrases but a kaleidoscope of pictures ricocheting from synapse to synapse.

The air was filled with the odor of burning wood, timber to be exact, much like those sooty, hazy days we often see when the hot, dry winds of August shift, reminding us of those perils that constantly stalk us throughout the summer. The TBM lumbered along the grass airstrip, the timbre of its throaty radial resonating off the canyon walls, eventually rolling to a stop not far from where I stood.



Grid Rowles then.

The pilot quickly unstrapped and stepped down from the cockpit. He moved toward me in a manner that conveyed a sense of urgency. He stopped and surveyed me with a questioning look.

"Are you one of the ground crew, young fella?" he asked.

"No sir," I replied, stammering a bit.

He stuck out his hand. "Grid Rowles," he said pleasantly.

As I shook his hand, he wondered out loud, "If you're not with the ground crew, then where are they?"

As quickly as he approached, just as quickly he turned back to his aircraft, calling to me over his shoulder as he strode away, "Gotta good fire up on Big Creek. I want to drop a few more loads before I head home. Bettie and the kids will be waiting for me." He disappeared into the haze and smoke.

The phone rings. I let it ring. Somewhere between the story I was reading and my imagination, I had stepped into this surreal conversation with the subject of the article. It was so cool to try and visualize what it may have been like standing there watching someone like Grid go about his routine. Then the memory of my first meeting with Grid gave rise to a broad grin.

I first met Grid 11 years ago at my first Challis mountain flying clinic as the brand spanking new Safety/Education Coordinator for the Division of Aeronautics. Grid had long ago stopped flying those fire missions but still flew an occasional instructional

flight for the clinic. During the ground school while one of the instructors talked about the hazards of density altitude, may have been Frank Giles, I heard a high-pitched whine. Like most of us who have flown for most of our lives, we are probably lucky to hear anything at that frequency. But it was there; incessant, penetrating and soon had the attention of the entire class. We were trying discretely to look around the room to locate the source while not appearing rude and inattentive to the speaker. Closest to Grid, I leaned forward in my chair and discovered that the shrill whine was emanating from Grid's hearing aid. Grid was the only one in the room who couldn't hear it.

An unassuming man, with an engaging smile and always a friendly "hello", Grid traces his flying career in Idaho's backcountry with the legendary Johnson's Flying Service and in the company of Bob Fogg, Penn Stohr, Bill Doris, and Al Tice.

In more than 60 years of flying, skill and luck has seen Gridley through more than a few aerial adventures; and he saved at least three lives. He inspired confidence in the friends, fellow naval aviators, flight school cadets and family members who flew with him: whether it was in a Cessna or Piper in the Idaho backcountry, a Stearman biplane trainer, or landing a U.S. Navy F4U fighter plane on the impossibly small deck of a World War II aircraft carrier.

As a boy, probably about 1928, he remembers seeing a plane flying high over Round Valley. The pilot was Charles Lindbergh, Gridley was later told. That put the idea into his head that he, too, wanted to become a pilot.

See Gridley Rowles

Continued on page 11



Gridley Rowles

Continued from page 10

Grid was born on December 9, 1919 to Donald and Florence (Gridley) Rowles, the first of three boys, in a log house that still stands next to his small home and the Penwell Mansion on North Avenue in Challis.

As a boy, Gridley got his first 15-minute flight in a Curtiss "Jenny" biplane at a 1928 county fair in Pennsylvania. "I was amazed to feel that thing," he later said. From that first flight to his solo in a Taylor Craft in 1939 to his private license in 1940, Gridley is one of those personages whose life is intertwined with those early days of aviation. A 1942 graduate of the University of Idaho in Chemical Engineering, Grid taught primary flight training at Moscow in his early Navy days. When he moved to fly Stearmans at Ottumwa, Iowa, one of his students was the future astronaut, Scott Carpenter. His favorite story involved a training flight, in which he gave his student, Bob Dick from Glenns Ferry, a simulated engine out over an island in the Des Moines River. Unfortunately, when he instructed the student to terminate the simulated emergency, their usually reliable Stearman had other ideas and refused to continue operating.

So onto the island and into the 12-foot high corn they thrust their trusty craft. Safely on the ground with nothing more than a scratch or two to their aviator's pride, it soon became apparent that their remaining problem was not one of safety but one of how to get off the island. It had no bridges. The aircraft could be barged off; but seeing that their Commanding Officer had given specific orders to remain clear of this island made reducing the cost to the Navy and the number of teeth marks in their collective backsides a major consideration. A review of the original "emergency" revealed that the cause was brought on by not clearing the engine in the course of the training episode. With their spirits lifted by this grain of good news and after a short discussion on the merits of barging versus flying the aircraft out, it was a "no brainer"; the flight won hands down. After taxiing up and down the island four times to "build" their runway, the inaugural flight of the original "Iowa Cornhusker" was successfully completed.

Grid renewed his commercial pilot's license after the war and in 1952 began flying the Idaho backcountry for Johnson Flying Service, nicknamed "Johnson's Flea Circus." Bob Johnson and Pehn Stor, two of the first Idaho backcountry pilots in the 1930s, started the business.



Grid Rowles at 30.

Following World War Two, Grid was one of the first pilots to calibrate wartime TBMs (Grumman Avenger Torpedo Bombers) for conversion to dropping borate solutions on forest fires. At 16,000 pounds, including 600 gallons of slurry, Grid flew the TBM from airstrips in the Middle Fork and Big Creek for seven years until the Forest Service elected to phase it out for multiengine aircraft. The firefighting work was rough and dangerous. With his usual modesty, Gridley brushes off any reference to the difficulties involved in flying the TBM under these conditions with a wave of his hand, a smile, and, "She was a beauty." Those that know him, though, will say it took enormous skill and precise airspeed control to make the TBM perform.

Grid and Bettie had five children: Terrie, Mike, Carter, Don, and Charlie. All learned the joy of flying at an early age. Each of the four boys learned to fly under their Dad's watchful eye.

Son Mike remembers Grid flying very early in the morning because of the summer temperatures and the density altitude. "Dad would leave the



The original Iowa Cornhusker.

See Gridley Rowles

Continued on page 15



Twin Falls Fliers

By: John Gallian, President

Twin Falls Fliers will be holding a fly-in breakfast, lunch and seminar at the Twin Falls, Joslin Field (TWF), on Saturday, September 6, 2008. The festivities begin with breakfast from 8:00 until 10:30 a.m. Following breakfast, Frank Lester, Safety/Education Coordinator, Idaho Division of Aeronautics, will give Part 1 of a 2-part seminar, "Performance and Density Altitude—Making Bold Pilots, Old Pilots." Following lunch at the Twin Falls Fliers' hangar, Part 2 will be a practical application of the seminar principles to a short field performance takeoff exercise. Those participants with their own aircraft will have the opportunity to test their skills at clearing a fifty-foot obstacle. Come join us for a great day of hangar flying and real flying!

Twin Falls Fliers is now in its 67th year. The club was incorporated on October 16th 1941 and is one of the oldest continually operating flying clubs in the United States. John W. Garrett was



The club airplanes and some members in 1958. Members, l to r: Harold Fillmore, Merritt Shotwell, Arnie Oslund, Dick Waite and Lionel Dean. Hourly rate for the Piper Super Cruiser was \$6, Ercoupe was \$5, and the Piper Tri-Pacer was \$7.

the first president and Dorothy L. Hutchings was secretary-treasurer. Its purpose is "to encourage interest in aviation, and provide economical flying rates to its members." Operations began on the dirt/gravel runways of the old Twin Falls airport, one mile southeast of its present location. During WWII, gasoline was rationed and the war department prohibited flying clubs from flying within 200 miles of the coast line. While other flying clubs ceased operation because of these restrictions, Twin Falls Fliers continued to operate by training pilots for the Civil Air Patrol and using club aircraft to participate in searches for downed military aircraft.

The club was able to procure additional gasoline through its Civil Air Patrol activities.

The club's first airplane was a Piper J3 Cub purchased almost new in 1941 for the astounding price of \$1845.00. In 1943 club members built a 2-airplane hangar in their spare time and purchased an Aeronca 60 TE. When Twin Falls/Joslin Field was opened in May of 1948, the hangar and the two airplanes were moved to its present location. Over the years, the club has owned two J3

Cubs, a Piper J4A, Piper Super Cruiser, Aeronca 65 TC Defender, Taylorcraft, Ercoupe, Piper Clipper, two Piper Tri-Pacers, two M20C Mooney Mark 21s and an M20J Mooney 201. We presently have two Cessna 182s and a Cessna 172.

For those of us who are addicted to flight, any excuse to fly is worthy. But not all our flying has been for pleasure or personal business as seen by some notable examples. In 1943 five club members participated in a search for a downed B-17 near Challis. In February 1951, member Dick Waite flew to Stanley to rush seriously ill 5-year old Howard Danner back to Twin Falls for medical treatment.

No aircraft accident is amusing, but there was one that should be remembered. On April 26, 1988, a club aircraft, a Mooney M20C, lost power on a go-around and went into the Highline Canal next to the Twin Falls airport. Fortunately, no one was injured, but after the pilot and passengers walked along the wing onto the canal bank, the airplane began drifting down the canal toward a bridge. A local farmer lassoed the tail of the Mooney and prevented it from hitting the bridge. The airplane was a total loss, but the canal company was pleased that damage to the canal and bridge was avoided.

Club membership is held to 25 members. Last summer we purchased a "new" hangar with a small apartment we use as the clubhouse. If you're in town, give us a call (208-733-4632) and come as a guest to one of our meetings, held the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Memberships do become available, so if you're interested, keep in touch. See you at the fly-in September 6.

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National Based Aircraft Inventory

Number of Idaho airports contacted	27	
Number of Idaho airports that have responded	27	100%
Total number of based aircraft for Idaho airports contacted (Form 5010)	2,003	
Total number of aircraft entered for Idaho airports contacted	1,770	88.4%
Total number of Idaho Airports that have changed their passwords	0	0%
Total number of Idaho Airports that have confirmed their counts	0	0%

Since November, 2006, over 2,700 non-Primary airports in the National Plan of Integrated Airport System (NPIAS) in all fifty states and Puerto Rico have been contacted for their Based Aircraft information. A website (www.gcr1.com/5010ba/) was established to allow direct on-line entry of based aircraft details. To date, over 86% of the airports contacted have responded to the national survey.

The results of the actual data being collected are producing very interesting results. However, of more interest than the actual based aircraft data is the dialogue that the data has generated between the FAA, state aeronautics agencies, airport managers/operators, and aircraft owners. To address the questions raised through this dialogue, GCR has formed an alliance with the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO) to assist in the [promotion of the on-going based aircraft inventory effort](#), and the dissemination of data nationwide. The based aircraft data will be continually updated as part of the annual Airport Safety Inspection program administered by GCR.

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Gridley Rowles

Continued from page 11

house at about 3:45, fly as many borate runs as distance, fuel and time would permit. After that, he was often on his way to work by 8:00 or 8:30. As a young boy, I learned to recognize the sound of the TBM engine. When Dad would return from dropping a borate load, I would run out into the yard to see if I could spot him flying home on his last run of the morning."

In his book "Jumping Skyward," author Stan Tate recalls watching one of the single-engine TBMs as it came in to drop a heavy load of borate. The engine quit in the middle of a turn and the plane dived out of sight. Tate was waiting for the sound of a crash. With great fear, a short prayer and holding his breath, he recalls thankfully hearing it start up again and saw the bomber pull out of the dive just in time. "That was Dad," said son Don.

Grid also flew hunters and fishermen into the backcountry and flew snow surveys out of McCall in the 1950s, landing in the backcountry on skis. Grid loved flying the Idaho backcountry best, because of the challenge of the short airstrips.

In 1944, Grid pulled two people out of a burning airplane after a drunken pilot wiped out seven planes. He also saved a local woman's life – Diane (Dudley) Wentland, now of Challis – by flying her out of the backcountry after she suffered a serious

head injury in October of 1963. Diane and her family lived at the Whitewater Ranch on the main Salmon River, the only family who lived on that stretch of the river.

They literally had airmail – backcountry pilots would drop the mail while flying over. Diane, 8 years old at the time, and her three brothers were always excited when a plane circled overhead. They would run up to the airstrip, climb up into some pine trees, then start the trees swinging back and forth, grabbing hands as the arc of the swing brought them closer together.

One time, however, the top of Diane's tree broke, and she fell, striking her head on a big boulder. Grid had been flying a Forest Service crew into the backcountry when he overheard the distress call. Backcountry emergency personnel treated Diane's injuries and Grid flew her out to the McCall hospital.

"The fact that they got me out as quick as they did, in 1963, was a miracle," said Diane years later.

Diane didn't find out who the pilot was until 2001. Now an employee of Furness Medical, Diane began caring for Grid as a patient in July of 2000. About a year later much to her astonishment,

Grid told Diane the story of a little girl he'd flown out of the backcountry, long ago.

"The airstrip at Whitewater Ranch was one of the worst backcountry airstrips, if not the most difficult, for take off and landing," Diane told The Challis Messenger last summer. She remembers that Gridley Rowles and Marvin Hornbeck, who flew for her family, were both great pilots who handled the airstrip with exceptional skill.

"Gridley was a key part of my survival," Diane said. "Without him, I would have died. It's a small country. To find him and find that out many years after the fact..."

After more than 60 years and 14,000 hours, Donald G. "Gridley" Rowles, still



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See Gridley Rowles

Continued on page 20

FAA honors city of Orofino for airport project

By: ITD Communications Staff

An airport improvement project in Orofino, partially funded through ITD's Division of Aeronautics, received an award for project management and planning during the annual Northwest Mountain Region's Airport Conference in Seattle, April 21-23.

The award was given "In recognition of superior project management in planning and completing major airport improvements to enhance safety and increase efficiencies for the aviation community." Donna Taylor, Northwest Mountain Region division manager, and Carol Key, Seattle Airports district office manager, presented the award for "doing the most for the least effort."

The city of Orofino received a \$1.1 million Airport Improvement Program grant in April, 2007, as part of a major reconstruction project at the municipal

airport. ITD and the city provided matching funds for the federal grant.

City officials issued a contract to S&S Contractors of Lapwai to complete four major components in a relatively short timeframe of 45 days. The construction company began the airport improvements June 1, 2007, and completed them six weeks later, on July 15.

Work included:

- Complete reconstruction of runway 09/27
- Relocation and construction of a new connector taxiway
- Installation of a medium intensity runway lighting system, and
- Extension of the southerly and easterly boundary security fences

Contractors also installed a new, lighted windsock.

Riedesel Engineering provided the design and construction management for the project. The award acknowledges the city's commitment to the needed airport improvements,

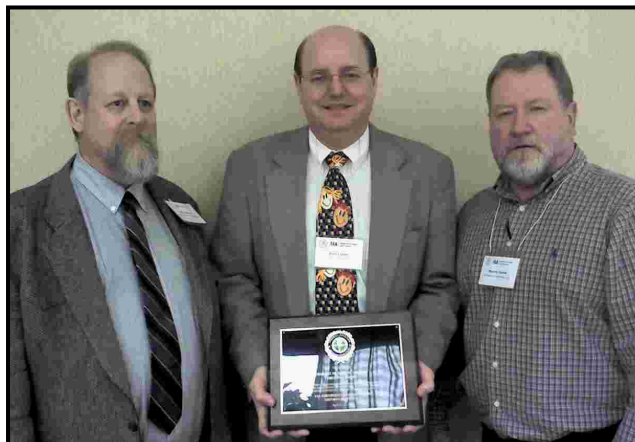
which also included a similar project in 2004 for the realignment and reconstruction of the airport's parallel taxiway.

All of the improvements were in accordance with the updated Airport Layout Plan – Narrative Report, an airport planning process that was completed in 2003.

"The project, completed within the city's timeframe, was also completed below the engineer's original cost estimate," according to city officials. "...The city of Orofino has expressed its appreciation to FAA's Northwest Mountain Regional office, the Idaho Division of Aeronautics, S&S Contractors and Riedesel Engineering for their combined assistance and guidance throughout the entire project."

Orofino's small municipal airport is nestled in the scenic Clearwater Valley and parallels both U.S. 12 and the Clearwater River. The region is a popular destination for hunters, fishermen and other outdoor enthusiasts.

City Administrator Rick Laam accepted the award on behalf of the city council.



Left to right, Bill Statham, Aeronautics; Rick Lamm; Marv Kerbs, Riedesel Engineering

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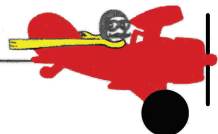
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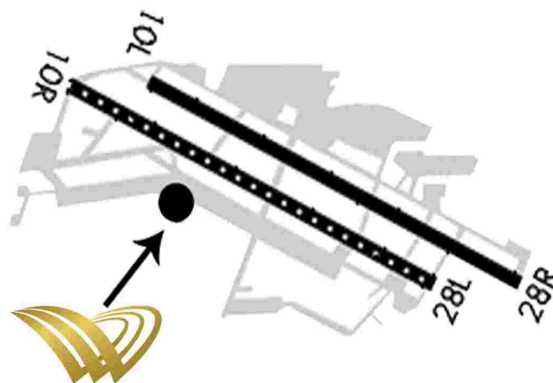
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Calendar of Events

JULY

- 26 **Twin Falls Air Affair**, Blue Angels will perform. bcarberry@tfd.org, 208-733-5215
- 26 **EAA Huckleberry Pancake Breakfast**, Boundary County Airport, 208-267-4359
- 28-8/1 **Boy Scout Campout**, Warm Springs Airport, 25 scouts/5 adults Tom Briten, 870-7976

AUGUST

- 2-3 **Idaho Guard at Warm Springs Airport**, 5 Helos/ 4 Humvees, 20 people — no flying, just camping
- 9-10 **Idaho Guard at Warm Springs Airport**, 4-5 Apaches/ 4 vehicles, 20-25 people, Chris O'Leary, 208-272-4023
- 13 **Aero Advisory Board Meeting**, Stanley, Aeronautics, 208-334-8775
- 16-17 **B-25 Bomber Days**, Warhawk Air Museum, Nampa, Guest speaker Jonna Doolittle Hoppes, granddaughter of General Jimmy Doolittle. Also, autographed books, signed by 3 of the Doolittle Raiders and Jonna Doolittle Hoppes will be on silent auction. Saturday, 10am - 4pm, Sunday, 10am - 3pm. Admission: \$10 General, \$8 Senior/Military, \$6 Children (5-12). Warhawk Air Museum, 208-465-6446
- 22-24 **IAA Picnic, Cavanaugh Bay Airport**, 65 aircraft. Wayne Thiel, 375-3411 x 498
- 30 **EAA Huckleberry Pancake Breakfast**, Boundary County Airport, 208-267-4359

SEPTEMBER

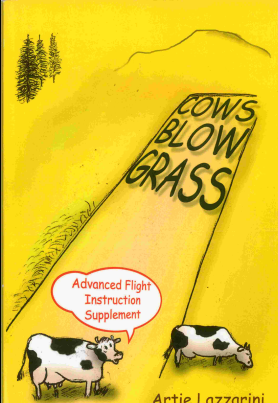
- 6 **Twin Falls Fly-in Breakfast**, Twin Falls Airport. Breakfast from 8:00-10:30 am. Featured speaker following breakfast - seminar details to be announced. John Gallian, 208-733-4632
- 10-14 **Reno Air Races**, Reno, NV, www.airrace.org
- 13 **Ontario Air Faire(ONO)**, 6 Acrobatic acts, Breakfast-food all day-IAA Flyin-Music on stage, Free Admin-contact Roger Smith 208-739-3979, Rlstps@aol.com
- 13 **Lewiston EAA Chapter Fly-In**, Lewiston Airport. Flying skills contests with prizes, static displays, LOTS of food! Frank Miles, 208-305-7450, f.miles.tcp.833@clearwire.net
- 13-14 **Gunfighter Skies 2008** — Mountain Home AFB, Open House and Airshow! Featuring the USAF Thunderbirds with 2 full days of military and civilian performers and static displays. Gates open 8 am to 6 pm, www.silverwingsofidaho.org
- 15 **Rudder Flutter articles due for next issue.**
Email to: tammy.schoen@itd.idaho.gov
- 20 **British Car Club**, Warhawk Air Museum, Nampa. Join us and learn more about when Britain stood alone against Germany. The event will include British automobiles presented by the Idaho British Car Club, speakers, a round table of veterans involved in the Battle of Britain and much more. Cars will be on display from 10 am - 2 pm. Admission: adults \$8, Seniors (65+) & Military (w/ID) \$6, and children (ages 5-12) \$4. Warhawk Air Museum, 208-465-6446
- 24-28 **Fall Canyonlands Safari**, McCall Mountain/Canyon Flying Seminars, www.mountaincanyonflying.com, Lori MacNichol, 208-634-1344
- 27 **EAA Huckleberry Pancake Breakfast**, Boundary County Airport, 208-267-4359

- 28 **Gold Star Mothers**, Warhawk Air Museum, Nampa. The Warhawk Air Museum will honor "Gold Star Mothers" as a day of reflection and respect toward the mothers who have lost children to wars. It will also embrace the meaning of "Gold Star" as it pertains to anyone who suffered the loss of a loved one during a conflict. Each "Gold Star Mother" who visits the museum will receive a flower to honor her loss. Hours: 11 am - 4 pm. Warhawk Air Museum, 208-465-6446

NOVEMBER

- 9 **Veteran's Breakfast**, Warhawk Air Museum, Nampa. The public is invited to join us for pancakes, eggs, hash browns, orange juice, coffee and milk, from 8:00am to Noon. \$6.00 adults, \$3.00 Seniors, Veterans and Children (5-12). Special thanks to Albertsons/Savon and the Top Fun Flyers. Live entertainment from 9-11am. Warhawk Air Museum, 208-465-6446

Email your event information to
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Gridley Rowles

Continued from page 15

loves to talk about airplanes and the beauty of flying in our unique backcountry. If you ask him he will quietly tell you about his many experiences and the icons of aviation he has flown with, but only if you ask him. I did and I still haven't heard enough. I hope that I will be able to get most of it before it passes into the endless halls of history, never to be experienced again.

I see Grid Rowles in the red and green hues of our aviation tapestry.

Editor: Many thanks to Todd Adams of the Challis Messenger, and Don and Mike Rowles for their assistance in researching this article.



Gridley Rowles

